

MUSICAL QUOTATION AND INFLUENCE

A STUDY OF WORKS BY EUGÈNE YSAÏE AND MAX REGER  
DRAWING ON THE MUSIC OF J.S. BACH AND VIOLINISTS OF THE EARLY  
TWENTIETH CENTURY

By

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## **Musical Quotation and Influence: A Study of Works by Eugène Ysaÿe and Max Reger Drawing on the Music of J.S. Bach and Violinists of the Early Twentieth Century**

This paper explores the concept of musical borrowing and the compositional technique of “imitation and transformation” as evident in selected solo violin works of Eugène Ysaÿe and Max Reger. Ysaÿe’s Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op. 27 (1924) and Reger’s Preludes and Fugues for Solo Violin, Op. 117 (1909-1912) provide in markedly different ways rich fields for study, as both are openly influenced by the Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin of J.S. Bach (1720). We will examine the varying ways in which Bach’s presence is felt in these works, with particular emphasis on Ysaÿe’s second Sonata and Reger’s *Chaconne*. Most interesting is how, in their imitation and transformation of Bach’s works, both Ysaÿe and Reger remain true to their own styles and backgrounds. We will be comparing them not to determine the superiority of one or the other composer’s approach, but rather as contrasting and equally valid expressions of the past in the (then) present.

To be sure, the Bach Sonatas and Partitas have left a deep imprint on many composers, far beyond the two examples on which we are focusing, and we will be making reference to some of these other works. The decision to concentrate this research on Ysaÿe and Reger is due to the importance of their historical positioning. The early twentieth century was a critical period for the development of violin playing as we know it today; equally, it was a key time for the emerging understanding of the Bach solo violin works, and the era when these works gradually made their way from academies to concert halls. Seen in this light, Reger and Ysaÿe’s compositions can inform us not only about these composers but also about how Bach was perceived in their time.

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## **I. Introduction**

### **1. Concept of musical quotation and examples**

The use of preexisting musical materials can be found throughout western music history from the Renaissance to the present. For instance, Gregorian chants were frequently used as sources for new compositions in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. In the Baroque era, Handel often recycled musical materials, both from his own and other composers' works. For Romantic composers such as Mendelssohn, frequent quotations were motivated by admiration of particular composers and works. Even more in the twentieth century, many composers quoted materials for different purposes. Stravinsky resurrected eighteenth-century music and Charles Ives used musical quotations for programmatic purposes.

Quotations can vary from subtle referencing of familiar tunes to specific structural and programmatic quotations. Thus, definition of the concept can be difficult. Our main focus in this paper is to examine and compare works that narrow quotations down to a particular individual, era, style, reception, and impact.

Existing music or music that is easily recognizable can serve as valuable source material for a composer. First, the material provides the opportunity to display the composer's ability to transform it. Second, it offers a chance to convey particular messages through the inserted material from the composer's point of view. Finally, based on the knowledge or familiarity of the audience with musical phrases or particular intonations or intervals, the quoted material provides possible accessibility to a wider audience. For these reasons, existing music can be an important resource of composition and musical quotation is a significant device in the development of classical music.



Many musicologists have studied and written about musical quotations. Among them, Charles Michael Carroll has separated musical borrowing into three categories.<sup>1</sup> The first of these is subtle but extensively used self-quotation; that is using motivic and thematic ideas from a composer's own works. Examples of this are numerous and especially evident in large works by J.S. Bach, Handel, Mozart, Wagner, and Richard Strauss. Seven movements in Bach's *Mass in B minor* are rearrangements of earlier cantata movements, and similarly, four movements of Handel's *Messiah* are rearrangements of his previous works. In his article on Bach, Friedrich Blume remarks that "the reworking has been accomplished in such a masterful fashion that it might have been the original music to which the new text has been composed."<sup>2</sup> In the Cantata *Davidde Penitente*, Mozart used part of his own Mass in C minor. Similarly, in Richard Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*, he quoted from his previous works such as *Don Juan*, *Macbeth*, *Guntram* and *Don Quixote*.<sup>3</sup>

The second type, which is one of the most common methods, is borrowing from other composers' music in "socially acceptable fashion."<sup>4</sup> As Carroll points out, this reworking often evolves using the borrowed theme as a base for the theme and variations. In examining the violin literature of the twentieth century, we can find the theme and variation form often employed by Italian virtuosos and German composers.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Michael Carroll, "Musical Borrowing: Grand Larceny or Great Art?" *College Music Symposium* 18 (Spring 1978): 11-18.

<sup>2</sup> Qtd. in *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Youmans, Charles Dowell. *The Cambridge Companion to Richard Strauss*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 223.

<sup>4</sup> Carroll, 14.

Examples of theme and variations based on existing tunes are quite extensive. Interesting examples are Beethoven's variations on *Nel cor più non mi sento* from Giovanni Paisiello's (1740–1816) opera, *La Molinara*, and Brahms's *Haydn Variation* of 1873, based on a theme in B-flat major of "Chorale St. Antoni."<sup>5</sup> Among nineteenth-century violinists, Nicolò Paganini and Henryk Wieniawski were famous for their variations on existing popular opera themes such as Paganini's *Introduction and Variations* on *Nel cor più non mi sento*, *Variations on a Theme from Moses in Egypt* by Rossini, *Carnival of Venice*, *Op.10*, and Wieniawski's *Faust Fantasia*, *Op. 20*.

In a recent article, Peter Burkholder compiled other methods of thematic usage based on his study of Charles Ives' music: paraphrasing, arranging, setting, cantus firmus, medley, quodlibet, stylistic allusion, cumulative setting, programmatic quotation, collage, patchwork, and extended paraphrase.<sup>6</sup> These methods provide means of composition, both technical and artistic. Burkholder's definition of quodlibet encompasses these two aspects: "combining two or more existing tunes or fragments of tunes in counterpoint or in quick succession, most often as a joke or technical tour de force."<sup>7</sup> While his summarization of types of musical borrowing focuses on Charles Ives' music, these musical quotations are the foundation of many nineteenth and twentieth-century compositions. Among the violin literature of the twentieth century, we can find particularly rich combinations of methods in works by Ysaÿe and Reger. Further discussion of this point will continue in Chapter II.

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<sup>5</sup> Carroll, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Burkholder, "The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field," *Notes* 50 (March 1994): 854.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Carroll identifies yet another interesting approach to musical quotation from other composers, one that is psychological in nature. The particular context in which a musical quotation is used can infuse meaning into the work. For instance, an ironic or burlesque tone can be created. In the final scene of *Don Giovanni*, Mozart used quotations from Vincente Martin y Soler's *Una Cosa Rara* and Giuseppe Sarti's *Fra I Due Litifanti Il terzo Gode* to enhance his own aria that follows. The popularity of Soler's work had interfered with the success of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* the year before in Prague, and the juxtaposition of Soler's dull aria with a sprightly one of Mozart's own reflects Mozart's attitude towards to the quoted materials.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, quotations can be a mark of respect. In his *Missa Solemnis* Beethoven quoted from Handel's *Messiah*, "And he shall reign forever and ever (Dona nobis pacem)," to pay tribute to Handel's authority and lasting influence. Similar examples include Schubert's testimonial paraphrase of the choral theme from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, as well as Brahms' quotation in his Third Symphony of *Tannhäuser* by Wagner, by which, it seems, Brahms was acknowledging the legitimacy of Wagner's music, even though they were contentious rivals.<sup>9</sup>

The third type is the appropriation of existing music by composers wishing to pass it off as their own, which could be seen as plagiarism by today's standards. Although copying music was a fundamental practice in Bach's and Handel's time, it is important to distinguish the difference in attitude behind the practice between then and now. François-André Danican Philidor of the mid-eighteenth century massively

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<sup>8</sup> Carroll, 13-14.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 17.

borrowed from the music of Gluck in his operas, and in fact, Gluck was rather flattered by this. Yet by 1906, Sedley Taylor writes in *The Indebtedness of Handel to Works by Other Composers*,

As matters stand the fact remains that [Handel] accepted, indeed practically claimed, merit for what he must have known was not his own work. That this was wrong, can, it appears to me, be denied only by those who are prepared to establish the morality of an act according to the amount of genius shown in performing it.<sup>10</sup>

In Handel's time, musical borrowing was not an issue of morality, and the importance of the composer's role focused on the execution of the material rather than providing original and profound music. Consequently Taylor's later perspective on the ethics of musical borrowing reveals the change of attitude towards to musical borrowing over time. The penalty for today's plagiarism has been often documented. In the past few decades, with the development of digital sampling technique, the ethical debate over borrowed material has been reopened. In contrast, many composers of the eighteenth century accepted that their works would be borrowed from, an attitude that had faded by the early twentieth century.

While the morality of musical borrowing can provide an interesting topic for a discussion, our main focus here is the artistic transformation of borrowed material, which will be discussed through selected violin works by Eugène Ysaÿe and Max Reger.

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<sup>10</sup> Qtd. in *ibid.*

## **2. J.S. Bach and his impact on later composers**

J.S. Bach had a tremendous influence on many nineteenth and twentieth-century composers. Though his influence extended to almost every genre, we will focus on works that have a particular relationship with the violin literature of Bach. From the Romantic era through the early twentieth century, Brahms, Schumann, and Respighi share a particular attachment to Bach.

Following the German tradition, Brahms not only studied counterpoint carefully but also appreciated Bach's pedagogical purpose in many of his works. As a result, he composed two piano etudes, one for each hand, based on the *Presto* from Bach's Violin Sonata in G minor. Robert Schumann's affection for Bach resulted in his piano accompaniments for Bach's Six Violin Sonatas and Partitas. In these fascinating works, we can observe how Bach's works were perceived from Schumann's nineteenth-century perspective.

Similarly, Italian composer Ottorino Respighi had a keen interest not only in Bach's music but in many other Baroque works as well. This can be seen through his orchestral transcriptions of BWV 659, 648, 645; the organ, strings and violin arrangement of Bach's E major Sonata, BWV 1016; and the large orchestral arrangement of the Prelude and Fugue in D major. Other composers whose music he rearranged include Vitali, Monteverdi, Boccherini, Frescobaldi, and Pergolesi.

Eugène Ysaÿe's six sonatas of Op. 27 were strongly influenced by Bach's Six Sonatas and Partitas in style and form. Max Reger's *Preludes and Fugues* and *Chaconne* of Op. 117 demonstrates a close relationship with Bach's solo violin music in its choice

of genre. As the example suggests, Bach's impact continued strongly throughout the twentieth century.

Perhaps no single composer has been as significant as Bach on the history of western music. This raises the question of what is so attractive about Bach's music that composers have been compelled to quote or rearrange it since the rediscovery of his works in the nineteenth century?

Bach's works display masterful contrapuntal technique, harmonic and timbral beauty, and pedagogic intent for various levels of students, and have proved to be an invaluable resource for scholars in performance practice, theoretical analysis, and historical understanding. Much of his output became the educational and compositional foundation for many later composers. The pedagogic benefit and the unique beauty of his works bring many performers to revisit them. Furthermore, the strong theological underpinning of Bach's music means that it will always be relevant in Christian worship services. The superiority and power of his music was described by Wagner as 'the most stupendous miracle in all music'.<sup>11</sup> Such connections may have drawn composers to his music and become a source of inspiration. Our examination of Ysaÿe's and Reger's works explains the adaptation of Bach's language from a twentieth-century point of view for the *fin-de-siècle* audience.

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Kennedy, ed., "Bach, Johann Sebastian," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev., *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e715> (accessed September 8, 2012).

## II. Examination

### 1. Eugène Ysaÿe's Six Solo Violin Sonatas, Op. 27

#### Biographical background and associates

Belgian violinist, composer, and conductor Eugène Ysaÿe (1858–1931) was known for his outstanding violin playing and innovative thinking. He studied at Liège Conservatory with Rodolphe Massart, with Henryk Wieniawski in Brussels, and with Henri Vieuxtemps in Paris. Because of his talent Ysaÿe made important musical and professional connections during his time in Paris, many of which turned into long-lasting friendships. These relationships were fruitful in producing new French and Belgian works, many of which were dedicated to Ysaÿe: César Franck's *Violin Sonata* (1886), Ernest Chausson's *Concerto* (1889–91) and *Poème* (1896), Vincent d'Indy's *String Quartet No. I* (1890), Debussy's *String Quartet* (1893), and Guillaume Lekeu's *Violin Sonata* (1892).

Ysaÿe's compositions during his time in France create a Debussy-esque sound world by loosely juxtaposing distantly related chords. His work *Rêve d'enfant*, Op. 14 (1901) displays such elements.<sup>12</sup> This new technique helped to modernize the newly developing Belgian Violin School. The Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim who associated closely with Brahms was the dominant leading figure of the late nineteenth century. After Joachim's death in 1907, and with Ysaÿe's innovative violin writing, the center of violin playing had shifted.

Ysaÿe's career flourished up to the outbreak of World War I in 1914, bringing him the highest renown across Europe and America. However, due to increasing

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<sup>12</sup> Karen D. Hoatson, "Culmination of the Belgian Violin Tradition: The innovative style of Eugène Ysaÿe," (D.M.A. thesis, University of California, 1999), 6.

problems from neuritis and diabetes, which contributed to his loss of bow control, he turned to conducting and performed only occasionally. As a Music Director of the Cincinnati Symphony from 1918 to 1922, his scope as a major conductor was felt in this country. As a composer, although he was humble and rarely conducted his own works, he left a number of beloved works that have been played frequently. Among his oeuvre, it is his Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op. 27 of 1924 that represent the pinnacle of violin techniques since Paganini.

It is often the case that the creation of a work coincides with a significant experience in the composer's personal life. Such an experience could be a first encounter with a particular piece of music or meeting a fellow performer or composer. While a list of Ysaÿe's colleagues would be quite extensive, his specific dedication of each of the six sonatas of Op. 27 reflects his personal relationship with each dedicatee. The dedications were made to those whom Ysaÿe respected highly as representatives of the contemporary art of violin playing. As documented by his son, Antoine Ysaÿe, Eugène continued to speak of an "idée fixe" related to an "obsession for Bach," and of creating a set of works reflecting the characters of different masters of the present.<sup>13</sup> These artists were Joseph Szigeti, Jacques Thibaud, George Enesco, Fritz Kreisler, Mathieu Crickboom and Manuel Quiroga.

The first sonata was dedicated to Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti (1892–1973). After hearing Szigeti's performance of J.S. Bach, Ysaÿe's impressions were thus:

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<sup>13</sup> Antoine Ysaÿe, *Historical Account of the Six Sonatas for Unaccompanied Violin Op. 27 of Eugène Ysaÿe and Chronological Summary of the Major Events in the Master's Life and Career Followed by a Catalogue of His Compositions and a Discography*, translated by Nadine Leblanc, (Brussels: Editions Ysaÿe, 1968), 4.



I found in Szigeti this quality, rare in our time, of being simultaneously a virtuoso and a musician. One senses in him the artist, conscious of his mission as an interpreter and one appreciates him as a violinist who, aware of the problems, puts technique in the service of expression.<sup>14</sup>

As it was composed right after Ysaÿe heard Szigeti's performance of Bach's G minor sonata not only the First Sonata but also the entire set of Op. 27 were inspired by him.<sup>15</sup>

Szigeti was particularly interested in promoting contemporary works and had associations with Bartók, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, and Bloch. As a Hungarian violinist, he worked especially closely with Bela Bartók, premiering and recording his *First Rhapsody* as well as "Contrasts" for Violin, Clarinet and Piano. He also revived Busoni's concerto and wrote a number of cadenzas.<sup>16</sup> For Szigeti, an ardent promoter of new music, receiving a newly composed work by Ysaÿe was a tremendous joy. In his memoirs he expressed his overwhelming appreciation:

In the middle twenties, after I had spent a day or two playing quartets with Ysaÿe at his seaside home, Le Zoute on the Belgian coast, he called me to his bedroom and showed me the green leather-bound music manuscript book that was always at his bedside, a pencil stuck between its pages. When, on opening it I found my name inscribed above the first penciled sketches of the G minor Sonata.

Here was perhaps the last representative of the truly grand manner of violin...showing me music he was composing *à mon intention* – composing with my playing in mind! I am unashamed to admit that any level-headed evaluation of musical content, of architectonics, was out of the question for me at that moment. He began talking of 'my' sonata and of the others he was planning, telling me what they would mean to him when completed.... A glance at some of the pages showed me that here indeed was a work in the making that would permit later generations to reconstruct a style of playing of which the inadequate Ysaÿe recordings give us barely a hint.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ysaÿe, 6.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Boris Schwarz. "Szigeti, Joseph." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 5, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27314>.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Szigeti, *With Strings Attached: Reminiscences and Reflections*, (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1967), 116-118.

The Second Sonata was dedicated to French virtuoso Jacques Thibaud (1880–1953). Thibaud was especially interested in chamber music. Having played piano trios with his brothers, he joined Alfred Cortot and Pablo Casals in 1904, claiming worldwide fame. His relationship with Eugène Ysaÿe was a long-lasting friendship, and they often played in a chamber music setting as well. The friendship between Ysaÿe and Thibaud was deep and genuine; Thibaud admitted, “Ysaÿe and Sarasate are my ideals.”<sup>18</sup> Ysaÿe’s high regard for Thibaud is indicated in his statement, “There are two violinists from whose playing I can always be certain of learning something. They are Kreisler and Thibaud.”<sup>19</sup>

The Third Sonata “Ballade” was dedicated to Romanian violinist, conductor, and composer Georges Enesco, whose music was heavily influenced by his native folk music. Particularly the two *Romanian Rhapsodies*, *Impressions d’enfance* for violin and piano, and *Violin Sonata no.3* highlight his style.<sup>20</sup> Ysaÿe was impressed with this young talent from the moment he heard him and he described the process of composing the “Ballade” thus: “I let myself be drifted with my fantasy. The remembrance of my friendship and admiration for Georges Enesco and of the performances we gave together in the music room of that delightful queen, Carmen Sylva, guided my pen.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Frederick H. Martens, *Violin Mastery: Talk with Master Violinists and Teachers*, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes company, 1919), 265.

<sup>19</sup> Donald Brook, *Violinists of Today*, (London: Rockliff, 1950), 176.

<sup>20</sup> Noel Malcolm. "Enesco, George." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 6, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/08793>.

<sup>21</sup> Ysaÿe, 11.

The Fourth Sonata was dedicated to Fritz Kreisler one of the most celebrated violinists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ysaÿe's admiration of Kreisler is undeniable; Ysaÿe even offered him the original manuscript of Chausson's *Poème*.

The Fifth Sonata was dedicated to Ysaÿe's pupil and colleague, Mathieu Crickboom. He was Ysaÿe's student at the Royal Conservatoire of Brussels and eventually became his assistant and second violinist of the Ysaÿe Quartet. The quartet's repertoire included many French and Belgian compositions of the late nineteenth century such as works by Debussy, Chausson, and Lekeu. Crickboom himself was an active chamber player as well. He formed his own string quartet with Pablo Casals and Enrique Granados in Barcelona, where he also founded *Sociedad Fillarmonica*.<sup>23</sup>

Upon his return to Belgium in 1905, Crickboom took a professorship at the Liège Conservatory in 1910 and at the Conservatory of Brussels in 1919. Ysaÿe's dedication of the Fifth Sonata was inspired by Crickboom's lifelong devotion in teaching. Crickboom's most significant legacy was his continuous promotion of the Belgian school of violin playing after Ysaÿe.

The last Sixth Sonata was dedicated to a very talented Spanish violinist, Manuel Quiroga, who unfortunately was injured in an accident and therefore was never able to achieve his full potential. Ysaÿe spoke of Quiroga's prodigious technique, which stated in the complicated and intricate passage work of this sonata, considered by many to be the most challenging of the set.

Ysaÿe's close personal relationships with and his admiration for each of Op. 27's dedicatees were the major motivations of the works' composition. Each sonata was

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph M. Corredor, *Conversations with Casals*, (trans. from the French by André Mangeot) New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc, 1957), 164.

influenced by a particular personality and performance style. Together, they created a portrait of the art of violin playing in the early twentieth century.

### **Importance of the work**

Among Ysaÿe's later works, Op. 27 displays high level of virtuosity and innovative approach. Following the tradition of the nineteenth-century virtuosos, Vieuxtemps and Wieniawski<sup>24</sup>, Ysaÿe's musical style is highly skillful using double stops, bold contrast in dynamics and timbre, various techniques (*ponticello*, chromatic scales, *pizzicatos*), across-the-strings sweep, and irregular beats. The First Sonata's dedicatee, Szigeti, had this to say about the work:

He was well aware of the importance of his intensely individual double stop, chord and 'across-the-strings sweep' techniques in the history of violin playing ... I felt that these sonatas (Solo Sonatas, Op. 27) were more to Ysaÿe than yet another work would be to a composer whose prime function was creating. They were, perhaps, a subconscious attempt on his part to perpetuate his own elusive playing style.<sup>25</sup>

It is not only Ysaÿe's Op. 27 that displays virtuoso violin techniques but also his *Divertimento*, Op.24 of 1921 demonstrates highly technical writing including double stops, *spiccatos*, and up-bow staccatos with wide range of dynamics and articulations. See example 1, especially the first and second systems for its diverse articulations using up-bow staccatos and around the rehearsal letter **M**, which includes a quick and sharp dynamic contrast.

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<sup>24</sup> Although Vieuxtemps was Belgian and Wieniawski Polish, they taught at the Paris conservatory where Ysaÿe had his education. Their impact on French music was through establishing virtuosic violin performance at the conservatory.

<sup>25</sup> Szigeti, 116.

Example 1. Ysaÿe, *Divertimento*, Op.24 <sup>26</sup>

The image displays a musical score for Ysaÿe's *Divertimento*, Op. 24, arranged for violin and piano. The score is written in G major and 2/4 time. It consists of six systems of music. The first system features a violin part with a *(sane hâle)* marking and a piano part with *pp* dynamics. The second system includes a violin part with a *(calando)* marking and a piano part with *pp* dynamics. The third system shows a violin part with a *dolce* marking and a piano part with *pp* dynamics. The fourth system includes a violin part with a *(Flautato)* marking and a piano part with *p* dynamics. The fifth system features a violin part with a *f* marking and a piano part with *mf* dynamics. The sixth system includes a violin part with a *f* marking and a piano part with *f* dynamics. The score is marked with various dynamics including *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *dim.*, *cresc.*, *molto meno*, *a tempo*, and *trem.*. The score is numbered S. F. 5594.

<sup>26</sup> Eugène Ysaÿe, *Divertimento Fantaisie pour Violon et Orchestre Op.24*, Editions Antoine Ysaÿe & C, 1921. This particular edition is a reduction for violin and piano.

Ysaÿe was known for his innovative approach to violin technique. French musicologist, critic, and violinist Marc Pincherle praises Ysaÿe's work, especially the adaptation of classical technique to a twentieth-century perspective:

What a violinist Ysaÿe is! What new features he has brought to the technique of his instrument it is not easy to define. As for the left hand, marvelous agility and clarity, an adaptation of the classical technique to the much more capricious and inconstant tonalities for the modern. As for the bow, whether in long, sustained or rapid, detached notes, there is considerable and very free use of it. Perhaps attributable to the virtuoso's athletic build. Especially, and no one has ever had any success in this before, the use of undulating sonorities.<sup>27</sup>

This comment extols Ysaÿe's innovative approach to both left and right-hand technique, emphasizing creativity in sonorities and freedom of technical ability, which are vivid in his Op. 27. It is also interesting that Pincherle associates Ysaÿe's playing with "undulating sonorities." Perhaps it is describing Ysaÿe's usage of vibrato for the flexible changes of timbre.

Another important aspect of Op. 27 is the fact that they are sonatas for *solo violin*. As common as it is today, performing a complete Sonata or Partita by Bach was unusual back then. While Bach's Six Violin Sonatas and Partitas were written in 1720, they were not published until the nineteenth century. The popular genres for solo violin during the Romantic era were caprices and études de concert. Paganini, Ernst, Wieniawski, and Vieuxtemps all wrote many pieces in this fashion.<sup>28</sup> Sarasate often played Bach's D minor *Ciaccona* as a separate movement and in fact recorded the E major *Preludio* in

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<sup>27</sup> Antoine Ysaÿe and Bertram Ratcliffe, *Ysaÿe: His Life, Work and Influence*, (St. Clair Shores: Scholarly Press, 1978), 46.

<sup>28</sup> Christian Vachon, "Ysaÿe's Six Sonatas for Solo Violin: Influences and Inspirations." (D.M.A. diss., Peabody Conservatory of Music, 2003), 15.

1904, but there is no record of him playing a complete Sonatas or Partitas in a concert setting.<sup>29</sup>

Given these circumstances, Ysaÿe's contribution to bringing back solo violin as a significant genre after Bach cannot be stressed enough. While Ysaÿe observed J.S Bach as his model of structure and forms, he was also indebted to the solo repertoire of the nineteenth century. He explains to his son Antoine:

The genius of Bach frightens one who would like to compose in the medium of his sonatas and partitas. These works represent a summit and there is never a question of rising above it. Nevertheless, in spite of their difficulty, more in appearance than in reality, the works for solo instrument of Johann Sebastian Bach do not constitute an evolution in the instrumental technique. He was inspired by the Italian giants' admirable model and the progress of the violinistic art appears most notably in Viotti and his successors, de Bériot, Vieuxtemps and Wieniawski. When one hears a master of the bow like Joseph Szigeti, who can adapt his talent equally well to the classical style, to the romantic inflections, and to the modern harshness, one feels encouraged to attempt an experiment, and I think of a piece for solo instrument essentially conceived "through and for the violin", endeavouring to occasionally follow the specific playing of one or another great violinist of our time.<sup>32</sup>

Ysaÿe's comments explain both the composer's hesitation and motivation in attempting to compose an experimental work "conceived through and for the violin." In Op. 27, the result of this effort blossomed through highly idiomatic writing that provides continuous attraction to performers today. As Eugène Ysaÿe's son Antoine recalls, the framework of Op. 27 was completed quickly, in just one night.

After arriving at his destination in the evening [Le Zoute, 1923], the master retired to his study where he played for a short while on his muted Guarnerius (he always worked with mute). The next morning, we saw him come down from his studio, showing tired features but beaming as he said: "there, I have composed the outlines of six sonatas for unaccompanied violin." During the next weeks, he

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Antoine Ysaÿe, 4.

revised the sketches and personally tried out all the passages. The work was quickly finished and was ready for publication during the course of 1924.<sup>33</sup>

As Ysaÿe “personally tried out all the passages”, the work displays extremely idiomatic writing. Using unusual markings and five to six-note chords; at first his music looks highly difficult. However, performers can grasp it easily after understanding the logic behind his method. The means of execution are clearly explained through the “Signes-Abréviations,” a table of Ysaÿe’s symbols and their meanings (Figure 1). Each symbol is a specific instruction for bow usage, articulation, length of notes, and choice of fingerings. The unusual comment at the end states, “Without disputing that the technical processes are an individual matter, one can say with certainty that the artist who will look closely at the fingerings, bowings, dynamics and indications of the composer, will always get closer to the goal more quickly.”<sup>34</sup> From this comment, we can observe how the attitude towards to a learning process has been changed over time. Although today’s students are often taught to follow the fingerings, bowings and dynamic in the music, the comment of Ysaÿe describes rather strong emphasis on following the instructions. From the collections of his students’ music, especially from Louis Persinger and Viola Blanche Mitchell, it is evident that Ysaÿe’s teaching included extensive repertoire with great attention to detail.<sup>35</sup> Mitchell was a student of Ysaÿe later in his life and was learning the Prokofiev Violin Concerto in D major. Since the concerto was written in

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> See p. 29 for Eugène Ysaÿe, *Six Sonates pour violon seul*, Op. 27 (A. Ysaÿe: Brussels, 1924).

<sup>35</sup> Ray Iwazumi, *The Legacy of Eugène Ysaÿe: Transmitted, Adapted, and Reinterpreted*. (Music Library Association, 2010), 71- 86.



1916-17, this implies that even after retiring from the concert stage, Ysaÿe was still interested in contemporary works.

Figure 1 Eugène Ysaÿe, *Six Sonates pour violon seul*, Op. 27, Signes – Abréviations

### Signes - Abréviations.

Les 4 cordes;  $\bar{m}\bar{i}$ - $\bar{l}\bar{a}$ - $\bar{r}\bar{e}$ -sol. <sup>③</sup>

En se maintenant sur une corde ① ② ③ ④

Doigt immobile: - - - - ④

Poser le doigt sur la quinte juste: ⑤

Restez à la position: - - - ③

A la pointe: - - - - - ②


Au talon: - - - - - ①

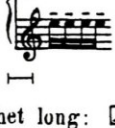
Au milieu: - - - - - ③

Note jouée isolément -  $\phi$

Le quart de ton au dessus  $\boxtimes$

Le quart de ton au dessous  $\boxdot$

Le sautillé: - - 

Le détaché à la corde: 

Employez tout l'archet:  $\dashv$


Archet court:  $\boxed{AC}$  - Archet long:  $\boxed{AL}$


Vibrant: -  $\boxed{VB}$  - Sans vibrer:  $\boxed{SV}$

Sans presser:  $\boxed{SP}$  - Sans hâte: -  $\boxed{SH}$

Bien mesuré:  $\boxed{BM}$  - Bien rythmé:  $\boxed{BR}$

Marqué-accentué:  $>>>$

Les accords ainsi notés: - - 

S'exécutent par un rapide arpegge. *Ex.* 

—

N.B. Sans contester que les procédés techniques soient du domaine individuel, on peut dire, avec certitude, que l'artiste qui regardera de près les doigtés, coups-d'archet, nuances et indications de l'auteur, se rapprochera toujours plus rapidement du but.  
E. Y.

Both Persinger's and Mitchell's collections demonstrate meticulous and detail-oriented instructions that apply to each individual specifically, especially fingerings and bowings. These collections prove that Ysaÿe's method of teaching was individually crafted and encouraged students to look into the details of fingerings and bowings and dynamics. As a teacher and mentor of many great artists, he may have felt compelled to explain himself in the preface to the published edition.

As we have seen above, Ysaÿe's greatest input to the repertoire was his innovative violin technique and a new approach to timbre with personal expression and creativity. Ysaÿe's Op. 27 attracts performers today with its idiomatic writing. The work also brought a new importance to the solo violin sonata as a genre in the twentieth century, after it had been all but forgotten after the eighteenth century. In his Op. 27 he adapted Bach's language and transformed it into something personal. Through this ground-breaking approach he contributed to the shifting of the center of violin playing from the Italian influence of Paganini to the new Franco-Belgian school of performers and composers.

### **J.S. Bach through Ysaÿe's ear**

One of the most interesting elements of Op. 27 is its resemblance to Bach's Six Sonatas and Partitas. While the Third, Fifth and the Sixth Sonatas display personal relationships with the dedicatees through loose structures and imaginative sonorities, the First, Second and the Fourth Sonatas demonstrate strong sense of influence from the language of Bach; First Sonata is in G minor as same as Bach's First Sonata, Second and the Fourth Sonatas used Baroque dance suite language similar to Bach's Partitas.

In the Second Sonata, unlike other sonatas, Ysaÿe quoted directly from two musical sources that served as ‘idées fixes’: one from Bach’s E major Partita, *Preludio* and the other from the thirteenth-century chant for the dead, *Dies Irae*.<sup>38</sup> Throughout the work, quotations from Bach frequently alternate between Ysaÿe’s own interpretation and recollection of *Dies Irae*. Thus a developmental variation technique became a tool to serve his artistic vision on both materials.

There are a few parallels with Bach in Ysaÿe’s Second Sonata. First, the movement refers to Bach’s Partitas. The first movement is entitled as *Prelude*, the second movement is in a slow 6/8 meter with lilting rhythms suggesting a *Siciliana* (similar to Bach’s First Sonata in g minor, *Siciliana*), and the third movement is a *Sarabande*. In the course of Ysaÿe’s six sonatas, the influence of dance suites is also displayed in the Fourth Sonata with movements of *Allemande* and *Sarabande*.

Second, Ysaÿe’s Sonata assimilates the texture and violin technique of the E major *Preludio*. The first movement displays a sense of perpetual motion similar to Bach’s *Preludio* (Example 2). Furthermore, the violin technique, *bariolage*,<sup>39</sup> and the Baroque compositional technique, *stretto*,<sup>40</sup> are used to convey the *Dies Irae* theme.

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<sup>38</sup> Bertram Greenspan argues that the theme of *Dies Irae* was used as a basic material in the entire works of Op. 27. However, I find his argument difficult to understand since the only link between the six sonatas and the theme of *Dies Irae* is the first three note of neighboring notes. I believe that the neighboring tone is simply a method of composition, not a quotation. Since Ysaÿe admits that he had no programmatic intention (discussed below) with the theme of *Die Irae*, categorizing a simple three neighboring notes as a quotation seems to be a stretch.

<sup>39</sup> The *bariolage* technique was one of the violin techniques in which melodic line and accompaniment using two strings. This French word means ‘odd mixture of colors’ to describe unconventional mixture of opening strings with stopped notes that the same note is played alternately on two strings. It was often used in works of Italian virtuoso composers of the eighteenth century such as Vivaldi, Viotti, and Corelli, as well as German composers such as Biber, Bach, and Pisendel.

<sup>40</sup> *Stretto* technique is often used in the writing of fuga where the voices overlap; one voice starts before the previous one is over. In violin playing this demands a high level of execution of bow technique.

Especially in mm.64–69, we can observe accentuated *Dies Irae* theme by clarifying the overlapping themes (*stretto*) while using fast string crossings (*bariolage*). (Example 3)

Example 2. Bach, E major, *Preludio*, opening



Example 3. Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 2, mov. I *Prelude* mm. 64–69



Further similarities in *bariolage* technique and voice leading are remarkable in the following Example 4.


Example 4.


4.1 Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 2, mm.61–63



4.2 Bach, E major, *Preludio*, mm. 13–16



While these parallels are apparent, Ysaÿe transformed Bach's language into the language of the twentieth century through masterful craftsmanship and his unique voice. We can see this transformation from the very opening. Ysaÿe's Second Sonata opens with dynamics and articulations to create a timbre and atmosphere that are different than Bach's Third Partita. It is marked *piano*, "*leggiere*," describing soft, light, and delicate playing. In order to achieve this sound quality, he suggested playing at the tip, indicated by his sign  (*A la pointe*: At the tip).

After a short pause, Ysaÿe's interpretation on the theme follows with indication, *Brutalement*. At first, it imitates a similar interval of minor seconds, then changes to falling fourths and fifths. This modification of Ysaÿe demonstrates his own interpretation of Bach's tune. Having heard mm. 3-4, the first two bars sound retroactively like a Dominant chord instead of a Tonic. This is confirmed in m. 11 with the decisive resolution to A minor. Here he placed an accentuation on each seven notes with *ff* and *Brutalement* conveying abrupt change of mood and character. He suggested fingerings with his symbol marking  (*Restez à la position*: Remain in the same position). (Example 5)

Example 5. Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 2 mov. I, Opening



Along with this characteristic transformation, Ysaÿe used the quoted themes in various ways. Most of Bach's quoted materials seem to be either background or sounds from a distance, marked in *piano*. The exceptions are in m. 42 and at the end, which are in contrasting settings; louder dynamic, and heavier articulation. Measure 42 is indicated *forte* and *marcato* for forceful sound quality. (Example 6)

Example 6. Ysaÿe, Op. 27 no. 2, mov. I, m. 42



The closing of the first movement is written similarly to Bach's *Preludio*, but transposed by a perfect fourth higher and in a dynamic setting of *ff* with different articulation.

(Example 7)

Example 7.

7.1 J.S. Bach, E major, *Preludio*, Ending



## 7.2 Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 2, mov. I, Ending



Perhaps this reflects Bach's theme recurring loudly in Ysaÿe's mind while he tries to escape from it.

In m. 45 and m. 47, the voice exchanges through chromatic movements are interesting; m. 45 down-beat E<sub>4</sub>-flat becomes the highest note of the third-beat and the highest note of the first-beat C<sub>5</sub> becomes the lowest note of the third-beat; similar exchanges are found in m. 47. Starting from m. 48, Ysaÿe used chromatic motion as the sequence unfolds. Having the sequence descend by step every bar with enharmonic changes, the top voice moves E<sub>5</sub>-flat- D<sub>5</sub>-D<sub>5</sub>-flat, D<sub>5</sub>-flat-C<sub>5</sub>-B<sub>4</sub>, C<sub>5</sub>-B<sub>4</sub>-B<sub>4</sub>-flat, B<sub>4</sub>-A<sub>4</sub>#-A<sub>4</sub>, and A<sub>4</sub>-G<sub>4</sub>#-G<sub>4</sub> in mm. 48–51. (Example 8)

Ysaÿe's individual voice can be seen not only in this transformation of the Bach's music but also through the use of the *Dies Irae* theme. As Antoine Ysaÿe suggested, one can describe this in a poetic manner.<sup>41</sup> The poem describes the Day of Judgment.

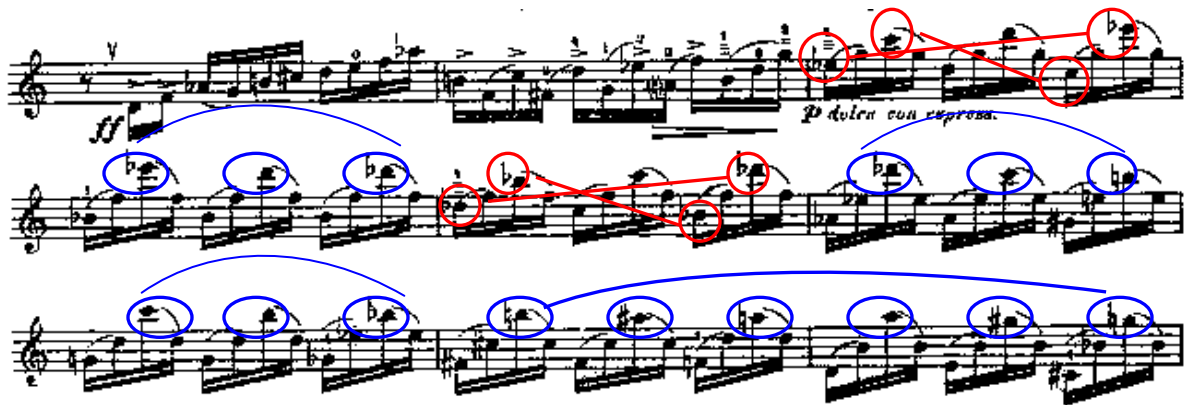
Dies Irae, Dies illa  
Solvat Saeculum in Savilla  
Teste David cum Sibila

Day of wrath and doom impending,  
David's word with Sibyl's blending,  
Heaven and earth in ashes ending!

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<sup>41</sup> Antoine Yaÿe, 9. Translated by William Josiah Irons in 1849.

Example 8. Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 2, mov. I, mm. 43–51



When Antoine Ysaÿe presented the idea of the poetic setting of the Second Sonata to Ysaÿe, the latter responded with surprise.<sup>42</sup>

Your story is very well conceived, but I thought nothing of the sort. There is the mystery of the musical thought which most of the time is beyond the intellect. Now, the obsession of Bach's theme led me to the "Dies Irae", but in the last analysis I simply wrote music for and through my violin, while trying to escape from Bach. I confess that I sweat blood and tears, and I nearly gave it all up, feeling crushed by the giant of music.

This honest response opposes the idea of programmatic music, a central platform of the Wagnerian, New German School language. It is also interesting that the theme of E major *Preludio* "led" Ysaÿe to the *Dies Irae* theme. I'd like to suggest a few possibilities of how he might have been inspired.

There are noticeable similarities between the E major *Preludio* and the *Dies Irae* theme. The intervallic relationship displays close association: minor seconds of E<sub>5</sub>-D<sub>5</sub>#-E<sub>5</sub> and G<sub>3</sub>-F<sub>3</sub>#-G<sub>3</sub> (Example 9).

Example 9.

9.1 Ysaÿe, Op. 27 no. 2, mov. II. *Malinconia*, *Dies Irae* theme

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.





9.2 Bach, E major, *Preludio*, mov. I, Theme



Both musical sources are from the past. Composers of the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries were highly influenced by rediscovered works of the Renaissance and Baroque era. From Mendelssohn's rediscovery of J.S. Bach to Kreisler's rediscovery of works by Boccherini, Martini, and Stamitz, works from the past were compelling subject matter in Ysaÿe's time.

There are few works in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that used the *Dies Irae* theme, as it was a continuously popular subject in music history. Ysaÿe might well have heard it and been triggered by the similar intervallic relationship with Bach's E major *Preludio*. Many composers have associated the text with the composition of their Requiems. Among the earliest examples of text adaptation would be the *Requiems* of Mozart (1791), and Cherubini (1816). In the nineteenth century, composers such as Verdi, Fauré, Maurice Duruflé, and Dvorak also quoted the text in their works.

Among the nineteenth century works, *Symphony Fantastique* (1830) by Berlioz displays quotations of *Dies Irae* theme in the fifth movement, *Songe d'une Nuit du Sabbat*. The opening theme is played by bassoons and tuba in unison. (Example 10)

Composers of the twentieth century were highly affected by the *Dies Irae* theme as well. For instance, Respighi's *Impressione Brasiliane* (1928) displays the quotation of *Dies Irae* using brass instruments similar to the composition of Berlioz.

Regardless of possible influences, from Bach to *Dies Irae*, Ysaÿe's characteristic writing continues throughout his Op. 27 no. 2. In the second movement, titled "Malinconia," this muted 6/8 slow dance in the style of a *Siciliana* ends on a dominant pedal tone B, leading into the recurring *Dies Irae* theme (e minor).

From this ending, we can observe the use of the musical borrowing technique, cumulative setting<sup>43</sup>, which was summarized by Burkholder. (See Chapter I) (Example 11)

The following movement is in them and variation form using an introduced theme, which is itself a variation on *Dies Irae* theme. The top voices of each chord from m. 1 to m. 8 complete the melody of the *Dies Irae* theme: G<sub>4</sub>-F<sub>4</sub>#-G<sub>4</sub>-E<sub>4</sub>-F<sub>4</sub>#-D<sub>4</sub>-E<sub>4</sub>, G<sub>4</sub>-G<sub>4</sub>-A<sub>4</sub>-G<sub>4</sub>-F<sub>4</sub>#-E<sub>4</sub>-D<sub>4</sub> (third beat of m. 6)-F<sub>4</sub>#-G<sub>4</sub>-F<sub>4</sub>#-E<sub>4</sub>. In this theme, Ysaÿe's choice of using G major derived from minor tonality *Dies Irae* is remarkable. Perhaps the appearance of the *Dies Irae* theme in the top note reflects the title 'Danse des ombres' (The dance of shadows). The theme is played as *pizzicato* in chords. (Example 12)

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<sup>43</sup> Burkholder defines cumulative setting: "A complex form in which the theme, either a borrowed tune or a melody paraphrased from one or more existing tunes, is presented complete only near the end of a movement, preceded by development of motives from the theme, fragmentary or altered presentation of the theme, and exposition of important countermelodies," 854.

Example 10. Berlioz, *Symphony Fantastique*, mov. V, *Song d'une Nuit du Sabbat*

Dies Irae

127 **K** sans presser

Bns

(Mi<sup>b</sup>)

Cors

(Ut)

Tromb.

Oph.

Cloches

142 **L**

Bns

(Mi<sup>b</sup>)

Cors

(Ut)

Tromb.

Oph.

Cloches

Example 11. Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 2, II. *Malinconia*

**MALINCONIA.**

**Poco Lento.**  
(*san Sordino*)

*poco*

*p*

*cresc.*

*mf*

*dim.*

*cresc.*

*dim.*

*ad lib.*

*sforz.*

*pp*

*ff*

Example 12. Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 2, III. *Danse Des Ombres*, Theme

**DANSE DES OMBRES.**

**Sarabande (lento)**

*pizz.*

(*san sord.*)

*mf*

*p*

*mf*

*p*

*mf*

*marc.*

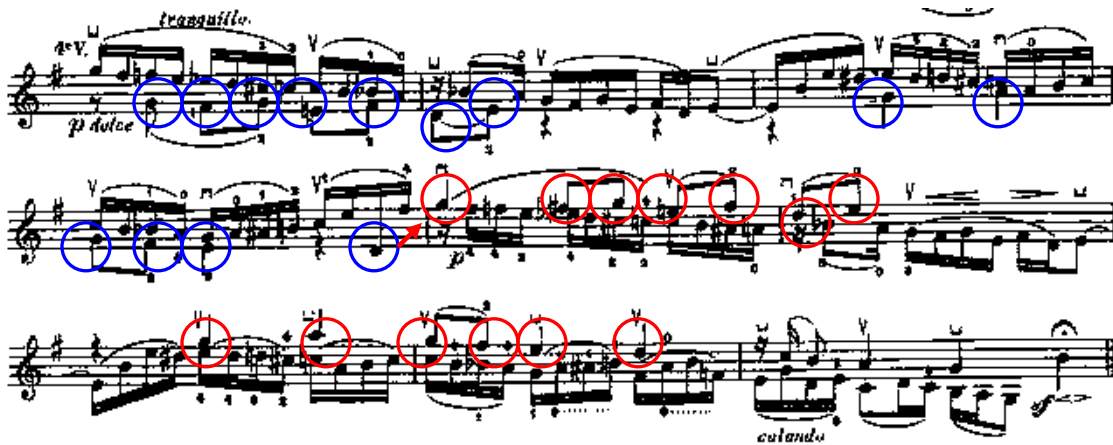
*cresc.*

*p*

Throughout the third movement, each variation intensifies. The diminution of note values and the increase of chromaticism particularly help launch the movement forward. The

fourth variation displays chromatic scales while first concealing the *Dies Irae* theme underneath and then moving to the top voice. Both hidden themes fail to complete the theme but rather lead into the descending scales of Variation V. (Example 13)

Example 13. Variation IV



In the fifth variation, the peculiar groupings of triplets are noticeable. These groupings have a subtle resemblance to Wieniawski Op.16, *Scherzo-Tarentella*. The articulation is set differently, but given that Ysaÿe was taught and influenced by Wieniawski, he may very well have been familiar with the work and played it himself. (Example 14)

In the sixth variation, the chromaticism and the rhythmic diminution reach their greatest point. This movement concludes with the *pizzicato* theme introduced at the beginning but played with a bow. Here the theme is intensified by the repeated down bows with additional ♯ and G# (in the bass) in the last measure creating a greater sense of achievement. Both insertions delay the cadence, delivering an even stronger sense of arrival. (Example 15)

Another interesting feature of this movement is its meter setting: 3/4 // 5/4. (See Example 12) This unusual usage of double meter perhaps indicates a necessary pause

between the variations similar to a written fermata, as if one sings the chant and breathes at the end of each sentence. The multiple meter use continues to the next movement.

Example 14.

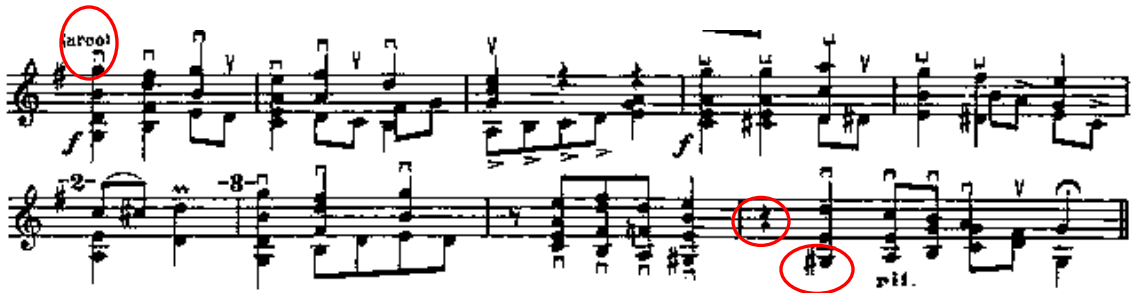
#### 14.1 Variations V-VI

The musical score for variations V-VI is presented on ten staves. The notation is complex, featuring numerous slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The first staff is labeled '5<sup>a</sup> V.' and includes the text '(templece non più vivu)'. The second staff is labeled '6<sup>a</sup> V.'. The third staff is labeled 'foco'. The fourth staff is labeled '6<sup>a</sup> V.'. The fifth staff is labeled 'f'. The sixth staff is labeled 'V'. The seventh staff is labeled 'V'. The eighth staff is labeled 'V'. The ninth staff is labeled 'V'. The tenth staff is labeled 'V'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, ties, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'p'.

14.2 Wieniawski, *Scherzo Tarentella*, Opening



Example 15. Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 2 mov. III, Ending



The last movement, titled *Les Furies*, displays virtuoso writing using Ysaÿe's double stops, sudden shifts in dynamics, and timbral changes. The composer's innovative thinking is well displayed in the middle section. The B section, m. 41, *Dies Irae* theme, starts with *ponticello* (on the bridge), and the interruption of the theme reverts to *ordinario* using his sweeping across the strings at m. 49. When it returns to f# minor (mm.56–69) the order has been reversed; first *ordinario* and then *ponticello*. The *ponticello* effect gives an impressionistic image with ghostly sound quality and provides more opportunities to explore diverse articulations and timbres. (Example 16)

This movement is in compound ternary form, with different meter settings for section A and B. The movement starts in duple meter and changes over to triple meter for the following middle section (Example 17). Similar to the opening, the music stands on the D7 chord for three measures until it achieves motivation to return back to section A.

Example 16. Ysaye, Op. 27, no. 2, mov. IV, Section B: mm. 41 – 66

The musical score for Example 16, Ysaye, Op. 27, no. 2, mov. IV, Section B: mm. 41 – 66, is presented across nine staves. The notation includes various dynamics, articulations, and performance instructions.

- Staff 1:** Starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure is marked *pp* (pianissimo). Above the staff, the instruction "(sul Ponticello)" is written, followed by "arco" (arco). The music features a series of eighth notes.
- Staff 2:** Continues the eighth-note pattern. A *pp* dynamic is marked below the staff. Above the staff, the instruction "(Ponticello)" is written.
- Staff 3:** The music continues with eighth notes. A *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic is marked below the staff. Above the staff, the instruction "(ord)" is written.
- Staff 4:** The music continues with eighth notes. A *pp* dynamic is marked below the staff. Above the staff, the instruction "(ord)" is written.
- Staff 5:** The music continues with eighth notes. A *ff* dynamic is marked below the staff. Above the staff, the instruction "(ord)" is written.
- Staff 6:** The music continues with eighth notes. A *pp* dynamic is marked below the staff. Above the staff, the instruction "(ord)" is written.
- Staff 7:** The music continues with eighth notes. A *pp* dynamic is marked below the staff. Above the staff, the instruction "(ord)" is written.
- Staff 8:** The music continues with eighth notes. A *pp* dynamic is marked below the staff. Above the staff, the instruction "(ord)" is written.
- Staff 9:** The music continues with eighth notes. A *pp* dynamic is marked below the staff. Above the staff, the instruction "(ord)" is written.

Other markings include "poco" (poco) and "dim." (diminuendo) in measures 41-42 and 43-44. The score also includes various articulations such as slurs, ties, and accents.



Example 16. continued, mm.67 – 100 (return of section A: harmonic return of A minor and melodic resemblance with a double bar line indication: m. 80)

(ord.)

*ff* *poco* *a* *poco* *dim.*

*pp*

*sfz*

*ff*

*mf* *G.D.*

*ff* *Allarg. poco.* *Lento*

*ff* *a Tempo.* *ff*

Finally, the return of the A section succeeds at m. 80, where the composer clearly indicated with a double bar line and a meter change to duple meter. Following the measure of rest (m. 92), the coda starts again with the *Dies Irae* theme (m. 93) and each measure is intensified by heightened dynamics, intervallic leaps, and register. Finally, the music reaches its highest and strongest point at the *Lento* of m. 96 and the movement concludes with great virtuosity.

In *Les Furies*, we can find many contrasting elements compared to the preceding movements. First, while the first movement, *Prelude*, opens with minor and major seconds, *Les Furies* opens with wider intervallic leaps, diminished seventh and major sixth. (Example 17)

Example 17. mov. IV *Les Furies*, Opening: Section A

Second, while the preceding movements are clearly influenced by Baroque dance suites in their titles and styles, this movement is in ternary form with a clear return of the opening theme at m. 80 of the theme suggesting nineteenth-century writing (see above Example 16). Furthermore, the first three movements demonstrate horizontal approach with melodic lines, while the last movement displays a vertical approach using chords with accentuations and fast and frequent interruptions. Finally, the harmonic progressions explain that the last movement is exclusively in minor keys with chromatic shifting of key areas, which contrasts with the majority of the previous movements: *Prelude*, E major–a minor; *Malinconia*, e minor–(b minor)–e minor; *Sarabande*, G major–(g minor)–G major; *Les Furies*, a minor–f minor–f# minor—a minor.

Ysaÿe mentioned that he was trying to “escape from Bach” while feeling “crushed by the giant of music.” These harmonic and stylistic approaches of the last movement perhaps support his struggle in the compositional process (see Ysaÿe’s comment on p. 25).

From this examination, it is interesting to see how Ysaÿe interwove the two themes of J.S. Bach’s E major, *Preludio* and the ancient chant of the dead, *Dies Irae*. He juxtaposed the two themes by responding to the quotations with his own interpretation of twentieth-century performance practice. We can discuss this in the context of various methods that Burkholder compiled from his study of Ives’ musical quotations and borrowings.

First, stylistic allusion is apparent (similar texture of perpetual motion), especially in the first movement. Second, patchwork can be seen through direct quotes of Bach and *Dies Irae*. Third, the complete *Dies Irae* theme is presented at the end of the second

movement, showing cumulative setting. In addition, the third movement is in theme and variation form using the introduced theme, which was conceived by the “*idée fixe*,” *Dies Irae*. This use of *Dies Irae* theme is a great example of paraphrasing technique.

In addition to these methods of quotation based on Burkholder’s terms of musical borrowing, this sonata displays a very interesting overall structure. The music builds throughout the first three movements using the eighteenth-century dance suites of *Prelude*, *Sicilano*, and *Sarabande*, and in the last movement the music states contrary elements in compound ternary form. From this form and structure, we can observe Bach’s influence while modified and crafted by Ysaÿe’s twentieth-century point of view and personal virtuosic performing style.

Bach’s influence on Ysaÿe is also evident in other sonatas of Op. 27. The First and the Fourth Sonatas demonstrate eighteenth-century elements, while the Third, Fifth, and Sixth Sonatas illustrate rather nineteenth-century influences and his personal relationships with the dedicatees.

The First Sonata, “Szigeti,” is in the overall key of g minor, and the slow *Grave* in ternary form leads into the Fugato of two-voice fugue. J.S. Bach’s First Sonata used a same tonality and structure; the slow Adagio suggests the key of g minor leading up to the second movement of four-voice fugue.

The Fourth Sonata, “Kreisler,” exhibited interesting structure and quotations as well. The first movement, *Allemande*, and the second, *Sarabande*, seem quite close to those in J.S. Bach’s Second Partita; first movement, *Allemande*; third movement, *Sarabande*. Furthermore, the last movement used a quotation from Kreisler’s *Praeludium and Allegro* in e minor of 1910. The perpetual motion of sixteenth notes and double stops

use, *détaché* and *spiccato* stroke is noticeably similar. The key setting of e minor could have been inspired by Kreisler as well. (Example 18)

Example 18.

18.1 Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 4, mov. III



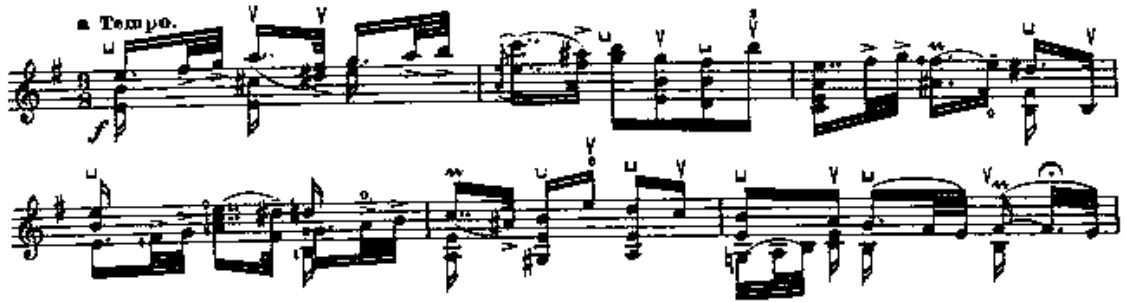
18.2 Kreisler, *Preludium and allegro*

This musical score is for Kreisler's 'Preludium and allegro'. It is a three-part score for piano, consisting of three systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The key signature is E minor (one sharp). The first system shows a rapid sixteenth-note melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The second system continues this texture with some harmonic changes. The third system features a more active right-hand melody with slurs and a left-hand accompaniment of sustained chords and moving lines. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'.

In the second theme of the first movement in the Fourth Sonata, we can observe close resemblance to the *Malinconia* of the Second Sonata with its *Siciliana*-like rhythm.

(Example 19)

Example 19. Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 4, Second theme of *Allemande*



The *Sarabande* is based on the *ostinato* of G-F#-E-A, which ends the movement quietly in chords of *pizzicato*.<sup>46</sup> In that sense the similarity between the two is apparent.

(Example 20)

Example 20. Ysaÿe Op. 27 no. 4 *Sarabande*

20.1 Opening



20.2 Ending

<sup>46</sup> Christian Vanchon suggests that the *ostinato* bass of Sarabande is similar to the Vincent d'Indy's String quartet Op.35, Third movement, 52.



The Third, Fifth, and Sixth Sonatas display freely written styles inspired by the composer's personal relationships with their dedicatees. The Third Sonata, written for George Enesco and subtitled "Ballade", used a tightly knitted structure with a chromatic motif, which reflects rhapsodic and improvisational qualities of Romanian folk music. We can also find an interesting resemblance to the Second Sonata, *Danse des Ombres*, variation VI with *Danse Rustique*. (Example 21) Such rhythmic groupings and the directions of scale indicate similarities.

Example 21.

21.1 Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no.3, *Ballade*



21.2 Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 2, *Danse des Ombres*



Enesco's music also made use of quarter-tones, especially in his opera *Oedipus* Op. 23. Although Ysaÿe's Third Sonata does make use of quarter-tones, it is used in the context of chromatic melodic movement rather than particular interest in Romanian folk music. (Example 22)

Example 22. Ysaÿe, Op. 27 no.5 *Danse des Rustique*



In the Fifth Sonata, “Crickboom,” the influence of Debussy and d’Indy is apparent. As a member of Ysaÿe’s quartet, Crickboom was often on stage with Ysaÿe performing French string quartets of the late nineteenth through twentieth-century repertoire. Owing to this experience, Ysaÿe quoted Debussy’s G minor String Quartet in this sonata; the endings of both works bear a close resemblance. (Example 23) This characteristic work, consisting of two movements, *L’Aurore* and *Danse Rustique*, exhibit Ysaÿe’s sweeping across the strings, improvisatory free passages, and continuous double stops.

Example 23.

23.1 Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 5, ending



23.2 Debussy, String Quartet in G minor, ending





The Sixth Sonata is in E major, which is identical to Bach's Third Partita. In this work, the chromaticism reaches its greatest complexity and the influence of Spanish music's Habanera rhythms is particularly noticeable. Celebrating Spanish dedicatee, Quiroga, works by Sarasate, Lalo, and Saint-Saëns could have been a major influence on its composition.<sup>48</sup> In the opening of Allegretto poco scherzando, the use of Habanera rhythm closely resembles Bizet's *Carmen*. (Example 24)

Example 24. Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 6



Throughout the six sonatas of Ysaÿe's Op. 27, we can witness composer's adaptations and transformations of the Baroque language creating something more personal. These modifications marked a new point for the solo violin with his innovative violin technique, the influence from French colleagues Saint-Saëns and Debussy, and the six dedicatees. These works continue to contribute to violin technique today with detail instructions for the performer.

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<sup>48</sup> Vanchon, 13.

## **2. Johann Baptist Joseph Maximilian Reger , Op.117 No.4 “Chaconne”**

### **Biographical background and his associates**

Born in Brand, Bavaria in 1873, Max Reger was first taught the organ by his father, an amateur musician. After the family relocated to Weiden, it was Adalbert Lindner who was Reger's first formal teacher and who introduced him to the music of Beethoven and Brahms with a particular focus on polyphonic writing. In 1890 he was sent to Wiesbaden for further study with Hugo Reimann. He undertook a systematic study of Bach's keyboard works under Reimann, and as a result, his early compositions, *Violin Sonata No.1* of 1890 (which was dedicated to Riemann and impressed him deeply), chamber works, songs, and piano pieces, are considered as important works.

Even after his study with Reimann was completed, Reger cultivated his musical contacts in Wiesbaden while he developed his musical ideas. It was then that he decided to complete his compulsory year of military service, from 1896–97. He described his time in the city as “Sturm-Trank zeit” (“storm-drinking time”); his consumption of alcohol and tobacco increased dramatically, perhaps due to the pressures of being a soldier.

His study of Bach and Brahms led him away from the opera house, and instead he developed more interest in absolute music. Thus, his music was very little influenced by Wagner and was often criticized by the “New German School” of Lisztians and Wagnerians.

Due to declining health Reger was forced to return home to Weiden in 1898. There he revived his interest in the organ and produced a number of works, such as choral fantasias, two sonatas, and the *Fantasia and Fugue on BACH Op.46* of 1900. His

fascination with Baroque and Classical music continued to grow and is evident in his compositions of this time. From these works, we can observe that he often used theme and variation form as a tool to restore the essence of Baroque music, intellectual balance and preserve architectural beauty.<sup>49</sup> The following examples demonstrate the use of theme and variation form: *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Bach, Op.81* (1904), *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Beethoven* (1904), *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Mozart* (1914), and *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of G.P. Telemann* (1914).

Reger built his reputation through frequent performances in Munich, and he was offered a teaching position at the University of Leipzig in 1904. At first he took a post as a theory instructor, and three years later he was also appointed as a composition and organ professor.

One of the most important events in Reger's career was a meeting with the sixteen-year-old Adolf Busch at the Cologne Conservatory in 1907. Busch performed Reger's Violin Concerto accompanied by his brother Fritz Busch, and later with Reger on piano. Their performances at a Bach-Reger Festival, featuring works by Reger, became an important contribution to his growing reputation.

Owing to this experience with Adolf Busch, Reger's later violin compositions reveal a great understanding of the instrument. In his Op.117, his admiration of Bach's music and the knowledge of violin technique are successfully combined and transformed through Reger's musical language. Much like Ysaÿe's sonatas, each work of Op.117 was dedicated to one of Reger's colleagues. The First and the Third *Präludium und Fugue* in B minor and E minor were dedicated to Henri Marteau (1874–1934). Marteau was a

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<sup>49</sup> John Williamson, "Reger, Max." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 6, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23064>.

chamber musician who often played works by Saint-Saëns, Fauré, and Reger. He became a professor at the Geneva Conservatoire and succeeded Joseph Joachim at the Hochschule für Musik, Berlin, in 1908.

The second *Präludium und Fugue* in G minor was dedicated to William Ackroyd, who was an English violinist with whom Reger gave a concert in London in 1909. He was also the leader of the Ackroyd Quartet, which promoted quartets by Reger.

The last, *Chaconne* in G minor, was dedicated to German violinist and composer, Gustav Havemann (1882–1960). First taught by his father, Havemann was a student of Joachim at the Berlin Academy of Music in 1898. He served as a professor at the Leipzig Conservatory from 1915 to 1921 and was a concertmaster of the Dresden Court Opera. He was also an active chamber musician, forming the Havemann Quartet and Havemann Trio, which frequently performed works by Alban Berg, Alois Haba, and Max Reger.<sup>50</sup>

It is unclear how Reger and Havemann became close. However, considering that Marteau, Ackroyd, and Havemann were active chamber musicians, Reger's dedications of Op. 117 could have been a form of appreciation for their active role in promoting his quartets. It also seems that Reger often associated with Joseph Joachim's acquaintances. Both Marteau and Havemann had close relationships with Joachim; one was his successor and the other was his student.

Marteau and Havemann continued to enrich the German violin school first achieved by Louis Spohr through performances of works by Reger, who greatly appreciated the older German tradition of J.S. Bach and Johannes Brahms.

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<sup>50</sup> It has been recorded that the Havemann Quartet performed often in Dresden during 1921; from Wolfram Steude, et al. "Dresden." In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/44245> (accessed October 8, 2012).

### **Max Reger, Op.117 no.4 *Chaconne* in G minor**

Reger's works were often criticized by the new German school of the nineteenth century. Detractors described his music as merely imitative of Brahms and Bach and lacking any originality. While he was highly influenced by both composers, in his Op. 117 no. 4, he demonstrates Bachian German tradition through the ears of twentieth-century custom. Reger's violin literature has neither been written about nor performed extensively.<sup>52</sup> As he is mostly known for organ works, I hope to provoke more interest in his violin works through this paper.

The adaptation of Bach's language is evident well from the opening. First, the blocks of heavy and wide chords and the rhythmic setting are noticeably close to Bach's *Ciaccona* in D minor.(Example 25) However, unlike in Bach's work, the theme starts on a down-beat, and lasts seven measures, reaching the cadence on the down-beat of the eighth measure. Throughout the variations, the length of each variation is inconsistent. The opening seven-measure and eighth-note theme is enlarged by the time it reaches the fifth variation. This unconventional use of theme demonstrates the modification of Baroque language into a more modernized idiom. Additionally, throughout the variations, Reger challenged the limit of violin technique and experimented with intense chromaticism. Even in the opening theme, the bass line moves chromatically from G to A-flat and to A, establishing the dominant on D where he divided the phrase into 3+4. From the fourth measure on, the bass line moves as C – Bb – B – C – C# – D – Eb – E – F

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<sup>52</sup> Antonius Bittmann discusses the fourth sonata op.72 in his essay *Max Reger and Historicist Modernisms*, (collection d'études Musicologiques, 95, 2004), 91. He argues against the criticism of Reger's sonata as an imitation of Brahms's Op.78 by emphasizing on harmonic language, the "series of dissonant clashes".

and D - C# - C – Bb towards the end of the phrase. Thus Reger extended the length of the bass line and combined with a chromatic vocabulary. (Example 29<sup>53</sup>)

Example 25. J.S. Bach, *Ciaccona*, mm. 1–16



During the course of variations, it is quite similar how both Reger and Bach created intensification by increasing rhythmic activity. In the first variation, the progression is characterized by triplet figures; then the second variation is illustrated by complex mixed rhythm of the eighth and sixteenth note figuration. The following variation is all sixteenth notes with an interesting combination of dynamics and slur–dot groupings. The fluctuation of dynamics in the third variation, growing from *piano* to *forte* and dropping down back to *piano*, is reminiscent of the last movement of the Debussy's String Quartet in G minor, the opening of *En animant peu à peu*. (Example 26) This type of dynamic use conveys a characteristic timbral effect as well as an undercurrent of nervous energy.

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<sup>53</sup> See Example 28, the complete score, on p. 52.

Example 26. Debussy, String Quartet in G minor, mov. IV, *En animant peu à peu*



Debussy's presence is also evident in other works, such as Reger's *Ballet Suite*, Op.130. Here, the use of soft dynamics, recalling the harmonic language of *La mer* and the whole tone scale, suggests inspiration from Debussy's music, viewed as "hypermodern" at the time in Germany.<sup>54</sup> Debussy's work gained popularity through the increasing number of performances between the years of 1909 and 1914.<sup>55</sup> The further resemblance between Reger's Op. 117 no. 4 and Debussy's String Quartet is in the choice of the G minor tonality.

Reger's frequent dynamic shifts between *piano* and *forte* or even more extremely, *pianissimo* and *fortissimo*, reflect his educational background. Although Beethoven frequently used sudden dynamic changes in his compositions as well, Reger's and Beethoven's use of such technique function differently. While Beethoven used dynamic contrasts as a musical humor and an emotional struggle, in Reger's work, it functions as an interruption of the melody and a method of indicating multiple voices. Reger was an

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<sup>54</sup> Bittmann, 205.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 202.

organist and the multiple voices heard in organ music are here reflected in the dynamic differences between the voices.

Many examples can be found. In the second variation, the soft dynamic voice seems at first to be an accompaniment. Then, this voice takes over starting from the fourth measure on and gains energy, growing to *forte*. In the thirteenth variation, however, the *pianississimo* indication serves the purpose of echoing the previous strong and wide leaps of ascending melodies. In the fifteenth variation, yet another kind of quick dynamic changes can be found. This time, the alternation between the two dynamics of *piano* and *forte* works like two players, for example, one organist in the front of the church and the other in the rear. (See p. 54 for variation thirteen and fifteen)

Another technique that Reger used was changing the direction of melodic line. While the fourth variation is based on ascending triplets, the eighth variation is based on descending lines. Furthermore the string crossing technique, which we have seen in Ysaÿe's Op. 27 no. 2, appears again in the fifth variation. (Example 27)

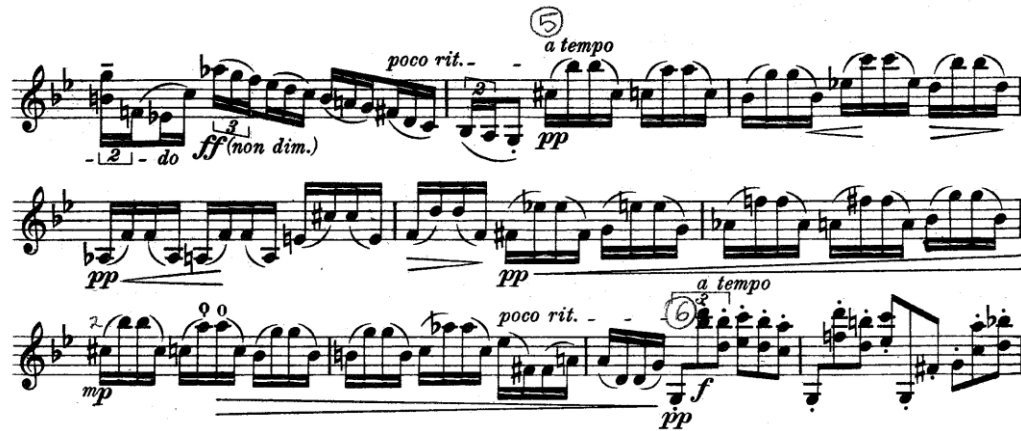
#### Example 27.

##### 27.1 Ysaÿe, Op. 27, no. 2, mov. IV, mm.45–47



##### 27.2 Reger, Op. 117, no. 4, Variation V





The further similarity between Ysaÿe and Reger is in their use of heavy double-stops. In his sixth, seventeenth, nineteenth and twenty-third variations, the challenge of double-stop execution is even more intensified by the continuous string crossings.

Similar to Bach's growing intensity throughout the variations, Reger's chromaticism reaches its greatest point in the twentieth variation in descending scales, leading into the calm and fluent melodic lines of the twenty-first variation. This variation conveys a contrasting mood and a rather private attitude using only the G string.

While Bach's *Ciaccona* concludes in a similar way to the opening (Example 28), Reger's last variation differs from the opening. First, the theme starts with a soft dynamic, *pianissimo*, grows throughout, and ends on the loudest dynamic of the movement, *fortississimo* whereas Bach's last variation stays closely to the opening theme without any melodic and dynamic changes. This effect is further emphasized by continuous accents under slurs. More importantly, from the twenty-seventh variation, the theme starts again on the down-beat instead of the second-beat and by the return of the opening theme the seven-measure and one-eighth-note-long phrase becomes a full eight-measure phrase providing a stronger sense of completion. Additionally, the theme becomes more

lyrical, especially from the fourth measure; it is much more horizontal compared to the opening.

Example 28. Bach, *Ciaccona*, mm. 248 – end



From this examination of Reger's Op. 117 no. 4 *Chaconne*, we can witness the use of theme and variation form serving as a tool to experiment with the possibilities of violin technique both in fingerings and bowings. Another demanding aspect of this work lies in the complexity of rhythmic activities and dynamic contrasts. Both Reger and Bach develop their themes using ascending and descending melodic lines, and rhythmic variations. However, Reger's *Chaconne* highlights even further with his background as an organist, especially in the use of a G pedal tone, wide chords, and indications of multiple voices in the style of organ music. While he was admittedly inspired by Bach, his Op. 117 no. 4 also reflects the influence of Claude Debussy, displaying dynamic and timbral effects.

Example 29. Reger, Op. 117<sup>56</sup>

Gustav Havemann zugeeignet

# Chaconne in g-moll

Max Reger, op. 117 Nr. 4

**Largo.**

*f* *ff* *a tempo* *p* *cre* - - - *scen* -  
*poco rit.* - *a tempo* *espress.* *espress.*  
*ff* *p* *do* *cre* *scen* *do*  
*poco rit.* - *a tempo* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*  
*p* *cre* - - - *scen* - - - *do* *f*  
*a tempo* *p* *f* *p* *f* *mf*  
*p* *cre* - - - *scen* -  
*poco rit.* - *a tempo* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*  
*do* *cre* - - - *scen* -  
*mp* *cre* - - - *scen* -

<sup>56</sup> Reger, Max. *Präludien und Fugen, für Violine solo, op. 117*, (Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1909), 14-9.

Musical score for a single melodic line in B-flat major, 3/4 time. The score consists of ten staves of music.

**Staff 1:** Starts with a 2-measure rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics: *ff* (non dim.), *pp*. Tempo markings: *poco rit.*, *a tempo*. A circled 5 is above the staff.

**Staff 2:** Continues the melodic line. Dynamics: *pp*.

**Staff 3:** Features a 2-measure rest, then a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics: *mp*, *pp*, *f*. Tempo markings: *poco rit.*, *a tempo*. A circled 6 is above the staff.

**Staff 4:** Continues the melodic line. Dynamics: *mp*.

**Staff 5:** Includes the lyrics "cre - scen". Dynamics: *ff* (non dim.), *p espr.*. Tempo markings: *poco rit.*, *a tempo*. A circled 7 is above the staff.

**Staff 6:** Includes the lyrics "do". Dynamics: *p*, *f*. Tempo markings: *sempre espress.*, *poco rit.*.

**Staff 7:** Includes the lyrics "cre - scen - do". Dynamics: *pp*, *f*, *mp*. Tempo markings: *a tempo*. A circled 8 is above the staff.

**Staff 8:** Dynamics: *f*, *sf sempre f*. Tempo marking: *(non rit.)*. A circled 9 is above the staff.

**Staff 9:** Dynamics: *p*. Tempo marking: *sempre espress.*.

**Staff 10:** Dynamics: *p*, *mf*. Tempo marking: *rit.*.

- - - ⑩ *a tempo*  
*pp f* *sempre f*  
*rit.* *a tempo espress.* *espress.* *espress.*  
*ff* *p* *sempre p* *un poco cre* *- - - scen - - - do mf* *poco rit.*  
 - - - *a tempo* ⑪  
*pp ff* *sempre ff* *rit.* *a tempo* ⑫  
*fff* *pf* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp*  
*rit.* *a tempo* ⑬  
*ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp*  
*sempre espress.* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp*  
*pizz. arco* *pizz.* *arco* *p* *cre* *- - - scen - - - do f* *rit.*  
*a tempo* ⑭  
*p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

55

(21)  
(a tempo Largo)  
sul G -

*mp*

*p* *ff*

*ff* *rit.* *p* *f* a tempo

*p* *f*

*mf* *cre* - - - - - *scen* - - - - - *poco rit.*

*do* *ff*

(23) a. tempo *p* *f*

*sempre f*

(24) *(non rit.)* *sempre f* *p* *cre* - - - - - *scen* - - - - - *do* *ff* *p* *cre* - - - - - *rit.* *pp* *f* a tempo

(25)

Musical score for piano, featuring ten staves of music. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various dynamics and performance instructions:

- Staff 1:** *cre* (crescendo), *mp* (mezzo-piano), *poco rit.* (poco ritardando).
- Staff 2:** *scen* (scenariando), *do* (diminuendo), *ff* (fortissimo), *(non dim.)* (non diminuendo).
- Staff 3:** *a tempo* (26), *sempre ff* (sempre fortissimo).
- Staff 4:** *sempre ff* (sempre fortissimo).
- Staff 5:** *sempre ff* (sempre fortissimo).
- Staff 6:** *a tempo* (27), *sempre ff* (sempre fortissimo).
- Staff 7:** *sempre ff* (sempre fortissimo).
- Staff 8:** *rit.* (ritardando), *a tempo* (28), *sempre ff* (sempre fortissimo), *espress.* (espressivo).
- Staff 9:** *espress.* (espressivo), *pp* (pianissimo), *menop* (meno piano), *e* (e), *cre* (crescendo), *rit.* (ritardando), *scen* (scenariando).
- Staff 10:** *do* (diminuendo), *fff* (fortissimissimo), *al fine* (al fine).



### III. Comparison and conclusion

This paper was sparked by my curiosity about musical quotations. As my research continued, I realized that Bach had an undeniably strong impact on the violin literature of the twentieth century. While many works can be interesting sources for the study of musical quotation as a field, the works of Ysaÿe and Reger are shining examples that, while sharing some similarities, display individual approaches to the adaptation of Bach's language.

Ysaÿe's Sonata No. 2 used a patchwork of quotations of J.S. Bach's E major *Preludio* combined with his improvisational chromatic language. The similarities with Bach's Partita are as follows: first in its style, with dance-suite-titled movements; second, in a similar texture with perpetual motion in the first movement of both works; and third, in a *Siciliana*-like rhythm in the second movement and a *Sarabande* third movement, alluding to Baroque idioms. However, Ysaÿe used theme and variation form to explore violin technique. The third movement displays intensification of rhythmic strength and complexity of violin technique. The last movement experiments with different timbral worlds alternating *ponticello* and *ordinario*. As a twentieth-century work, the last movement displays heavy chromaticism and virtuosity, recalling Ysaÿe's Franco-Belgian heritage.

Reger's Op. 117 no. 4 *Chaconne*, similarly to Bach's *Ciaccona* in D minor, used theme and variation form intensifying through rhythmic activities and dynamic settings. He also created a stylistic allusion using blocks of chords with similar rhythm in the opening. While Reger was strongly influenced by Bach, his work also demonstrates the influence of French works by Debussy.

Both Reger's and Ysaÿe's works share a similar early twentieth-century modernist language despite differences in approach. While Ysaÿe used unusual multi-meters under the Baroque dance titles in imitation of this style, Reger exercised the traditional  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter in his *Chaconne* as Bach did. Reger's musical language is based on the German tradition of contrapuntal writing with a melodic and chromatic bass line. Ysaÿe expressed his individual personality through the choice of *Dies Irae* theme, used as an *idée fixe*, the recurring theme of the work. This quotation sometimes was used in a similar manner to a cantus firmus, creating a new polyphonic setting, especially in the variation movement. Although he denied any programmatic setting for the work, Antoine Ysaÿe suggested that the music strongly suggest a narrative quality. Based on this comparison, the use of musical quotations and their musical idioms reflect the composers' different regional influences and educational backgrounds.

The impact of these works on violin repertoire today differs as well. Ysaÿe's sonatas, composed by an influential violinist, easily found favor with other violinists, and today are included in the standard repertoire. On the other hand, Reger was mainly known for his organ works and thus has made very little impression on violinists of the twenty-first century. Ysaÿe's works are often acknowledged as the earliest significant solo violin works of the twentieth century. However, Reger's Op. 117 was composed more than a decade before Ysaÿe's works. It might be only natural that Ysaÿe's work is better known, since he was a well-respected performer in his time. However, I feel compelled to emphasize that since Reger's work was composed much earlier, it should be appreciated for its effort in bringing a new light to the genre, a credit often given to Ysaÿe.

Reger's preoccupation with Bach developed throughout his career. It was his way of searching for his own musical language during a time after the loss of Brahms in 1897; Reger expressed his profound sense of loss in his journals.<sup>57</sup> No doubt during World War I this sense of emptiness increased.<sup>58</sup> While the war may have exacerbated this anxiety, Reger suffered from neurasthenia known as *fin-de-siècle* nervousness.<sup>59</sup> This neurological disease may have contributed to Reger's alcohol abuse, which stalled his professional career in 1898, 1906, and 1914. During these periods of recovery, it was Bach's music that helped to inspire his creative production.

In 1899, *fin-de-siècle* Germany witnessed the first publication of J.S. Bach's complete collected works, and in 1900 the Neue Bach-Gesellschaft was established.<sup>60</sup> Since Reger's study with Adalbert Lindner and Hugo Riemann, Bach had been a familiar figure to him. As he claimed in 1894, "Strictly speaking, we are all epigones of Bach."<sup>61</sup>

It was not only Reger but the whole of *fin-de-siècle* Germany that felt Bach's influence. The journal *Die Musik* of 1905–1906 published a large number of responses to a question entitled, "What does Johann Sebastian Bach mean to me personally, and what meaning does he have for our time?" The answers to this question portray J.S. Bach as a

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<sup>57</sup> Antonius Bittmann, *Max Reger and Historicist Modernisms*, Collection d'études Musicologiques 95 (Baden-Baden: Koerner, 2004), 37.

<sup>58</sup> The statement of Ritter reminds me of my recent encounter with cellist David Waterman of the Endellion Quartet. In our discussion he expressed that the "sense of loss" in this era created conscious or unconscious musical imitation and quotation of the eighteenth century.

<sup>59</sup> Bittmann, 116.

<sup>60</sup> Bittman, 55.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

“father of musical progress” and a “miraculous healer”. Hermann Ritter’s response strongly emphasized Bach as a savior from the “apocalyptic vision of cultural decay.”<sup>62</sup>

Bach’s works represent the redeeming contrast to all things banal and trivial, to everything hypersensitive, perverse, fashionable, and pathologically sentimental. Therefore, they provide, in our time as much as in any distant future, the most healthy food for our souls. Bach is, and remains, the great musical lawmaker—the Moses of the musical nations.<sup>63</sup>

Similar to Reger’s nervous disease, the nineteenth-century composer Robert Schumann also had a major breakdown in 1854. Shortly before his suicide attempt, he composed an accompaniment for the Six Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas by J.S. Bach in 1852-3. Perhaps both Reger and Schumann turned to Bach for the healing power of his music while they were struggling with their personal problems. Thus, the musical beauty and balance in Bach’s works represented a sense of idealism that was lacking in the lives of many modern composers.

In the journal *Die Musik* Bach was discussed as an innovator as well. Reger’s contemporary, organist Heinrich Reimann, compared the harmonic languages of J.S. Bach and Wagner: “Even Wagner’s exceptional art, with its genuinely musical, harmonic as well as combinatorial secrets, and in its high art of music-dramatic expression, is only congenial with Bach’s art.”<sup>64</sup> This statement makes an interesting point, since Reger’s

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>63</sup> Hermann Ritter, “Was ist mir Johann Sebastian Bach und was bedeuter er für unsere Zeit?” 30: “Bachs Tonswerke sind der erlösende contrast zu allem Banalen und Trivialen, zu allem Hypersensitiven, Persersen, Modischen, krankhaft Sentimentalen und bilden daher in unserer Zeit, wie in allen ferneren Zeiten die gesundeste Seelenkost. Bach ist und bleibt der grosse musikalische Gesetzgeber—der Moses der musikalischen Nationen.” Translated by Antonius Bittmann, 56.

<sup>64</sup> Heinrich Reimann, “Was ist mir Johann Sebastian Bach und was bedeuter er für unsere Zeit?” 33: “und selbst Wagners Ausnahmekunst ist in ihren echt musikalischen, harmonischen wie kombinatorischen Geheimnissen, desgleichen in der Höhenkunst dramatisch-musikalischen Auscrucks nur Bachscher Kunst kongenial.” Translated by Antonius Bittmann, 57.

music was often criticized by the New German School of Wagnerians and Lisztians for its similarity with Bach and Baroque music.

These comments reveal Bach as a leading inspiration of the new century, and the result shows clearly in Reger's and Ysaÿe's works. Reger's approach was to preserve and modernize the old master's style for the *fin-de-siècle* audience. While Reger was criticized for lacking in originality, owing to what some considered a dependence on the past, Bach's works also display close resemblance to works by earlier composers and his contemporaries such as Biber, Pisendel, and Vivaldi. Although it was a normal compositional practice to borrow musical material in Bach's time, by Reger's era individuality and virtuosity had become the main focus of violin literature. Going against the grain, Reger redefined Bach's historical significance at the turn of the twentieth century by reviving solo violin works and the use of Baroque preludes and fugues, passacaglia, choral fantasies, and choral cantatas.

Eugène Ysaÿe's works exhibit a different approach. A Franco-Belgian violinist and teacher whose impact on younger generations was considerable, Ysaÿe showed great fidelity to the nineteenth-century tradition of Vieuxtemps and Wieniawski throughout his playing and compositions. His sonatas for solo violin, Op. 27, offer great technical innovations inspired by Baroque style. Here, the adaptation of Bach is intriguingly fused with twentieth-century virtuosity and chromaticism.

Two composers' works demonstrate both similar and different approaches to adaptation of Bach's musical idiom and their efforts in the reevaluation of Baroque music and of Bach should be cherished. As a twenty-first century musician I feel strongly that our duty is to promote our heritage as well as contemporary works by living composers,

but it is also important to air works that have been forgotten over the years. I hope that this paper will encourage young violinists not only to continue the glorious tradition but also make known the lost twentieth-century German violin literature.

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